

## Functions:

## Article 7 functions:

### Content

7-42-6(f)(2)

7-42-9(a)(2)

7-42-6(f)(3)

7-42-9(a)(1)

- Grade-level Indiana Academic Standards are presented for viewing as a first step in writing goals aligned to content.

### Needs

- Prompts to identify the needs that the goals will address
- Ability to reference other data in the ISTAR system or external uploads

### Set Goals

- Goal Title
- Goal Statement
- Objective/ Benchmark statement, if needed
- Options to select graphing mechanism to monitor progress
- Options for designs: descriptive, single point, single rubric, collection of standard indicators, and continue with established progress monitoring
- Selection of the skill or skill area to which the goal aligns
- Links to post-secondary goals, for transition IEPs

## Goals

Purpose

Evaluation

Initiate

Eligibility

Outcomes

Goals

Content

Needs

Set Goal(s)

[Click here to view Grade Level Content.](#)



Indiana Department of Education  
SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Indiana Standards and Resources

ABOUT

STANDARDS

RESOURCES

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### STANDARDS SEARCH

KEYWORD:

☐ Core Standards ☒ All Standards

SUBJECT:

☐

☐

☐

☐

English

Math

Science

Social Studies

More:

GRADE:

☐ K

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ 8

More:

Reset

Search

As promoted by national organizations, the first step to goal setting is to consider the standards that drive the general education curriculum for the grade in which the student is enrolled.

For this reason, the action on the goal setting tab is merely a viewing function, for the case conference committee to scan for opportunities to give the student access to grade level content.

This is a new step that most of us are probably not accustomed to doing. It may seem like the pure girth of grade level standards would be prohibitive. For some students who function near grade level, highlights of the standards may be all that is needed. For other students, this activity may provide an opportunity for the case conference committee to invest creative thought into specific ways that the grade level curriculum could be accessed by a student with more disabling conditions.

The conversation should include a consideration of evidence of the student's functioning in relation to these standards.

Functional skill sets that comprise the ISTAR assessment and employability skills are available when designing the goal. This includes the areas of responsibility, interpersonal skills, and problem solving skills as well as physical skills, personal care skills, domestic care skills and community access skills.

The next step in writing meaningful goals is to identify the needs that will be addressed.

The identification of need should be a thoughtful process because this drives the selection of goal targets. The baseline performance for any specific area should be explained here.

Remember, there should be a goal that is written to address every need that is articulated here. There may be a one-to-one correspondence represented, a number of goals may be written to address a single need, or goals may address a composite of needs. Regardless, there must be a logical connection that shows how needs drive the goal setting.

To serve this process, a large text box is available. Users may also want to attach evidence of need from an external file or an ISTAR assessment. When a file is uploaded, it will be added to the uploaded files table. It can be viewed by clicking on the magnifying glass icon and it can be deleted by clicking on the scissors icon.

Content

Needs

Set Goal(s)

Identify the needs that will be addressed through goal setting:

## Goals

## How To

**Goal Title:**


**Annual Goal Statement:** Spell Check

The goals have been written to address:

- ☐ Independent Living Skills
- ☐ Employment Skills
- ☐ Education / Training Skills

**Method / Instrumentation for Measuring Progress:** Spell Check

Next Cancel

Goals are simply added by clicking on the  **Add Item** button.

Users will be prompted to write a title, which will appear in bold over the goal statement on the “Set Goal(s)” tab. If utilizing the templates of ICAN, the goal title will be the title of the template.

A larger text box, is used to author the goal statement. Because there are so many different models asserting specific formats for writing goals, this state product provides users with the freedom to apply their goal writing format within a simple text box.

For transition IEPs, the interface prompts the user to indicate the post-secondary goal or goals that this specific annual goal is intended to support. This will be printed later in a table that shows the relationship.

# Progress Monitoring Design

Goal Wizard - New Goal "Read a Book" X

**Annual Goal Statement:** Cathy should be able to open a book, read it's contents and understand what was conveyed in the text.

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**Progress Monitoring Design**

☐ **Descriptive Documentation**  
*The measurement of the goal depends on the ability of the author to articulate performance in measurable terms.*

☐ **Single Point**  
*The measurement of the goal depends on counting a number of instances or recording a score.*

☐ **Single Rubric**  
*The measurement of the goal depends on the articulation of progressive criteria intended to define increments of success.*

☒ **Collection of Indicators**  
*The measurement of the goal is based on direct assessment of one or more standard indicators an/or elements. Rubrics may be created for each element. This is the only option that interfaces with ISTAR data and permits longitudinal analysis based on standards.*

◀ Back Next ▶ Cancel

Next, the user is prompted to determine how best to design the progress monitoring features related to this goal.

The law requires a statement of measurable annual goals. This page helps the user think about how to assure that the goal that was written can be measured.

For all but the first choice, the user will be defining variables that will create a progress monitoring graph.

# Descriptive Documentation

Goal Wizard - Editing Goal "Money"

**Annual Goal Statement:** Marcy will identify and exchange coins for items of...

**Objectives / Benchmarks (required if the student is participating in ISTAR in lieu of ISTEP+)**



*From "Standards-Based Individualized Education Program Examples" by Marla Davis Holbrook. A Project Forum and NASDE publication, August 2007.*

**Descriptive:** A descriptive design relies entirely on the power of words. Based on a recent sampling, it is the most frequently used method of goal writing in Indiana. That also might be the reason that it is very hard to find incredibly powerful examples of goal writing in our state.

In order for a statement to be considered measurable, numbers or some sort of quantification is involved. In the absence of quality present level data, goals can become capricious and arbitrary. Many goal writers fall in the trap of using specific numbers, like "80% of the time", just so that their goal statements appear measurable.

There is no harm in using this option for goal writing and certainly no regulation preventing it. It may be a great way to continue current local habits and still use the software. However, it is probably the most difficult method to make scientific.

# Single Point Design

## Goal Wizard - Editing Goal "Read a Book"

**Annual Goal Statement:** Anthony will read 105 words of connected text per...

### Parameters to Build Graph

**Metric:** Words

**Initial Value:** 65.00

**Date:** 2/23/2009

**Target Value:** 105.00

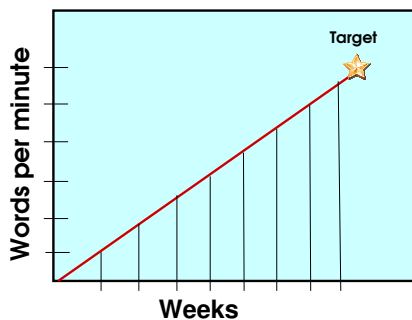
**Date:** 2/23/2010

**Frequency of Collection:** Bi-Weekly

Single Point Design: This choice is most appropriate for a single performance that could be sampled at regular intervals of time. The graph could be established to count incidents, sample opportunities, or record intervals. The vertical axis might be words per minute, days per week, success rate per trial, percent correct, etc.

### Single Point Design:

Here is a simple illustration of how the basic single point design could be conceptualized:



### Using the graphing tools

For all other goal designs, the user sets the parameters and builds a graph.

Metric: Enter in this box that which is being counted. This will become the title of the vertical axis. The assumption is that the goal is to build this skill, for example words per minute.

First data point (Initial Value): This should represent the present level. How many words per minute is the student able to do now?

Date of First Data Point: Use the calendar to set the base of the horizontal axis so that it begins with the first data point.

Frequency of Data Collection: This establishes the units of time across the bottom of the graph.

Target Point: What will be the numerical evidence that this goal has been accomplished?

Target Date: The coordinates between the target point and the target date indicate the target on the graph. A line is drawn which connects the first data point to the target.

# Single Rubric Design

Goal Wizard - Editing Goal "Money"

**Annual Goal Statement:** Marcy will identify and exchange coins for items of...

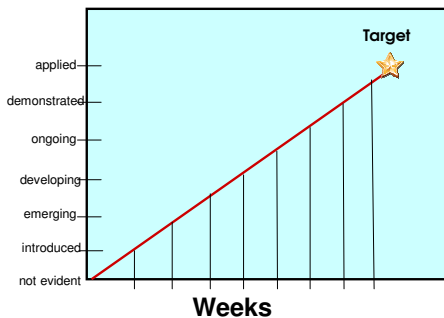
**Parameters to Build Graph**

Initial Value: Not Evident  Date: 2/23/2009

Target Value: Applied  Date: 2/23/2010

Frequency of Collection: Bi-Weekly

Single Rubric Design: This choice is most appropriate for a performance that is difficult to measure without the use of specific criteria written to define approximations to the goal. By using a defined rubric, the student's performance will be reported as emerging, developing, ongoing, demonstrated or applied.



## Single Rubric Design:

Here is a simple illustration of how the basic single rubric design could be conceptualized:

In this example, the following descriptors could be used to define the rubric criteria:

Applied: Identifies and exchanges coins for items of equal value 4 out of 5 trials

Demonstrated: Selects a coin for purchasing item of equal value 3 out of 5 trials

Ongoing: Exchanges coin for item of equal value 3 out of 5 trials with verbal cues and coin models

Developing: Given three choices, exchanges coin for item of equal value 3 out of 5 trials with verbal cues and coin models

Emerging: Given two choices, exchanges coin for item of equal value 3 out of 5 trials with verbal cues and coin models

Introduced: (present level) Given the value of a coin, exchanges coin for item of equal value 3 out of 5 trials with verbal cues and coin models

# Single Rubric Design

In the “Single Rubric Design” and as an option in the “Collection of Indicators”, this rubric designer is the structure where the content of the rubric criteria is entered.

Use the rubric library to save custom rubrics and apply them to multiple students or select the default rubric. If “Collection of Indicators” is selected custom rubrics may be developed for each element or the same rubric applied to all elements.

## Load Rubric Criteria

Criteria to Load:

Goal Wizard - Editing Goal

### Rubric Criteria Selection

A Non-Default Rubric with at least 3 Criteria must be defined.

— ● [MATH.3.1.1 ] Count, read, and write whole numbers up to 1,000.

ABC

Introduced

Emerging

Developing

Ongoing

Demonstrated

Applied

Rubric Library





# Collection of Indicators

## Goal Wizard - Editing Goal "Time"

**Annual Goal Statement:** Teddy will demonstrate through sign an accurate...

### Parameters to Build Graph

Initial Percent:  Date:  

Target Percent:  Date:  

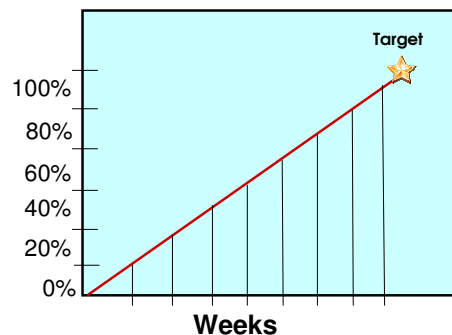
Frequency of Collection:  

### Collection of standard indicators/elements:

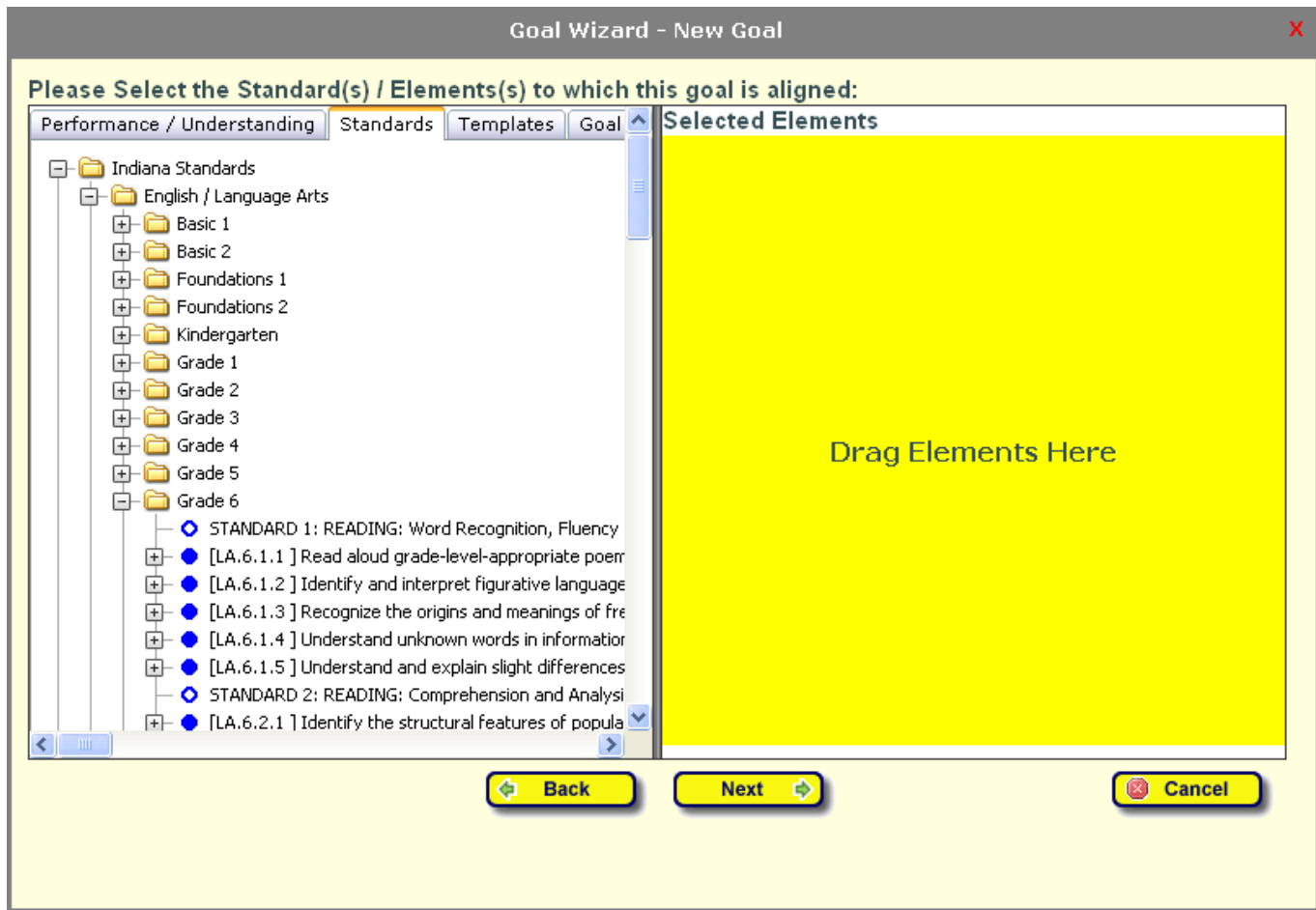
This choice is most appropriate for a performance that is described as the mastery of a group of indicators. For example, a particular collection of skills related to demonstrating achievement in a course of study may be measured using this design. There is also the option with this choice to define rubric criteria for each of the items in the collection if needed. ICAN users will recognize this as the classic goal template and the scoring mechanism used in ISTAR. Progress data will be calculated to represent the percent proficient where the full collection represents 100%.

### Collection of Standard Indicators/Elements:

Here is a simple illustration of how the basic collection of standard elements could be conceptualized:



## Goals



Once the progress monitoring design has been selected, the software will ask the user to define the skill or skill area to which this goal will align. The user can use a number of views to quickly find the reference to support this goal including Indiana Academic standards, performance elements, existing templates and goal sheets, or the ISTAR structure. A very broad area might be selected, like “Number Sense” or a very specific skill might be more appropriate, like “counts whole numbers to 1,000”.

Behavior goals may link to areas related to developing responsibility, interpersonal skills, or problem solving skills. Physical or personal care targets can be found in the functional trees of the performance tab or the functional section of the ISTAR tab.

The key to this process is that the goals address the identified need on the previous tab. In addition, this link provides justification for why this goal is important in order to give the greatest access to challenging content.

If the user has selected the progress monitoring design that involves a collection of elements, it is on this section where those elements could be collected or obtained from the user’s personal template library in the ICAN interface.

### Setting up the graph:

For those designs that use the graphing tools, the next step is to define the variables that will create the graph. Refer back to the goal statement and determine what exactly it is that you will be counting or measuring.

# Goal Summary

Goal Wizard - New Goal "Read a Book" X

Review Your Goal

**Goal Summary**

Title:

Annual Goal Statment:

The goals have been written to address:

- Employment Skills
- Education / Training Skills

Method / Instrumentation for Measuring Progress:

**Standard(s) / Element(s) Aligned to Goal**

- [LA.F1.1.1 ] Turn one page at a time.
- [LA.F1.1.2 ] Hold books right side up, looking at the pages and pictures.
- [LA.F1.2.1 ] Identify a favorite story.

**Progress Monitoring Design**

Collection of Indicators *The measurement of the goal is based on direct assessment of one or more standard indicators an/or elements. Rubrics may be created for each element. This is the only option that interfaces with ISTAR data and permits longitudinal analysis based on standards.*

Back Save Cancel

After the sections of the goal designer are complete, a goal summary is viewable. The graph frame will also be produced to show the parameters that had been set.

This goal summary is what is available in printed form when the user requests the goal summary report, possibly to share with other educators who work with the student.

## Content of Goals

**Q:** What does the law require in terms of the content or structure of the goals sheet?

**A:** The concept of a “goal sheet” has evolved from our reliance on forms. This is not a term that is described anywhere in regulation. Specifically, 7-42-6 (f) (2) requires only a statement of:

(A) measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to:

(i) meet the student’s needs that result from the student’s disability to enable the student to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum (or for early childhood education students, as appropriate, to participate in appropriate activities); and

(ii) meet each of the student’s other educational needs that result from the student’s disability.

(B) for students who participate in alternate assessments aligned to alternative academic achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short term objectives.

Generally, reports to parents are not expected to be lengthy or burdensome. The statement of the annual goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks in the child’s current IEP could serve as the base document for briefly describing the child’s progress. [64 FR 12594]

In one case involving a school district in Colorado, an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) noted that courts have provided little guidance in interpreting the IDEA’s requirements for IEP goals and objectives. The ALJ elaborated that, although there seems to be some degree of specificity required, the statute also envisions goals designed to meet the unique needs of each student. Keeping in mind that all decisions are case-specific, in this particular case, the ALJ determined that the following single goal was adequate for this particular 5th grader: “Maintain at least a C average with minimal assistance from a resource specialist.”

Generally, professionals in our field would not consider this an excellent goal. However, it is possible that our profession has taken on goal writing rituals that may or may not improve our practice. It is worth pondering.

## Requirements for Goals

**Q:** Are there other requirements to keep in mind when writing goals?

**A:** Goals should not be judged in isolation of the other components of an IEP. The most important quality of a well-written IEP is that all of the elements are logically and educationally related to achievement of the goals identified in the program.

The standard for determining if a student has received FAPE is whether the IEP was reasonably calculated to provide educational benefit.

Although IDEA does not establish a specific number of goals that must be included in an IEP, there should be at least one annual goal for each area of need. In a transition IEP, every post-secondary goal needs an annual goal and every annual goal should be tied to reaching a post-secondary goal.

For the IEPs of students participating in ISTAR in lieu of ISTEP+, short-term objectives should describe sub-skills of the annual goal so as to permit the monitoring of progress throughout the year.

Each IEP goal should have corresponding items of instruction or services identified.

An IEP that lacks meaningful educational goals is likely to be considered defective since no program can appropriately address a student’s needs without first defining the goals it is expect to achieve.

## Progress on Goals

**Q:** What if I have evidence that the student is not making progress toward their annual goals?

**A:** Failure to show a measurable progression reflects a significant programming problem that indicates a denial of FAPE.

The IEP team must revise the IEP to address any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals and in the general curriculum [34 CFR §300.343©(2)(i)]. Because of this requirement, it becomes critical that goals are crafted so as to allow for baseline measurement and progress monitoring.

## Goal Writing Strategies

**Q:** Is there any one goal writing methodology that is more closely aligned to regulation than others?

**A:** There are many systems for writing goals, many recommended formats, and many consultants for hire. Some established practices are very respectable and some may seem out of step with the most recent directions in goal writing methodology. The effort of crafting highly unique, autonomous academic goals is giving way to the emphasis on designing goals that give access to grade-level content.

One practice that is most current and is likely to appear in future regulation is the use of progress monitoring technologies, familiar in the RtI (Response to Intervention) process. Once a student is identified as needing special education services, the caliber of progress monitoring that had been provided in the general education should not diminish to dormant, static goal sheets. The art of goal writing is inadequate without the science of goal setting.

Additionally the concept of standard-based IEPs is working its way into regulations, particularly in the regulations for students who participate in a modified assessment. These are the steps recommended by Project Forum, a federally funded project:

Step 1: Consider the grade-level content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled or would be enrolled based on age.

Step 2: Examine classroom and student data to determine where the student is functioning in relation to the grade-level standards.

Step 3: Develop the present level of academic achievement and functional performance.

Step 4: Develop measurable annual goals aligned with grade-level academic content standard.

Step 5: Assess and report the student's progress throughout the year.

Step 6: Identify specially designed instruction, including accommodations and/or modifications that are needed to access and progress in the general education curriculum.

Step 7: Determine the most appropriate assessment option.

## Goals and Instruction

**Q:** Should the IEP goals focus only on those areas that require special education and related services?

**A:** The goals (and objectives) should only be concerned with the areas of need and should focus on offsetting the problems resulting from the disability that adversely affect educational performance.

For a student with a mild impairment, the goals may be limited in scope in order to address just the specific difficulty, as in the case of a speech impairment. For a student with more pervasive disabilities, the goals will be more comprehensive and will cover more of the student's educational program.

**Q:** What is the relationship between goals in the IEP and instructional plans ?

**A:** There should be a direct relationship between the IEP goals and the instructional plans for the child. However, the IEP is not intended to be detailed enough to use as the instructional plan.

**Q:** Should goals be written more in the style of mastery measurement or curriculum based measurement (CBM)?

**A:** Mastery measurement describes the mastery of a series of short-term instructional objectives. It requires the use of a sensible instructional sequence for the school year with criterion-referenced testing procedures to match each step in that instructional sequence. Often this approach is topic-based, akin to chapter tests.

CBM requires the repeated measurement of the year-end goal. Each assessment is of equivalent difficulty and is expected to show increased proficiency on the same task. Typically, benchmarks are used to describe an increasing proficiency on the same measure as time passes. This could be represented by expectations of a greater number correct, improved fluency, or increasing speed on a task that remains a constant.

Both of these methods give goals the quality of measuring progress over time.

## Objectives and Benchmarks

**Q:** Why do we need to write objectives or benchmarks for some students and not for others?

**A:** In earlier legislation, objectives or benchmarks were required in every IEP. In current regulation, objectives or benchmarks are only required for students who meet the criteria to participate in ISTAR in lieu of ISTEP+. Statements of measurable goals, however, are still required for all students.

The original language was designed to enable parents, students and educators to monitor progress during the year, and, if appropriate, revise the IEP. With advancing progress monitoring practices, there are more sophisticated and less cumbersome ways to monitor the progress of students who participate in general education curriculum. In addition, it has become much easier to revise IEPs under new regulations.

Objectives are generally written to break the annual goal into discrete components, a process sometimes called task analysis. For students who are making academic progress, the indicators of the Indiana Academic Standards can be considered analogous to the intermediate steps typically described as objectives. As the alignment between local curriculum and academic standards improves, these objectives become more naturally delivered through educational experiences and can be monitored through quality classroom measurement and reporting routines.

Benchmarks are defined as amounts of progress expected within specific segments of the year, possibly corresponding with reporting periods. In picturing a progress monitoring trajectory sloping up to the target goal with time as the horizontal axis, the benchmarks would be the various points of accomplishment along this slope line as time passed. Many schools have implemented benchmarking procedures for all students, not just those in special education.

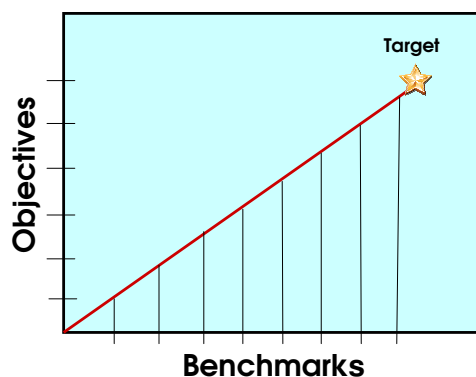
Highly individualized goals, typical of those written for students with the most significant disabilities, do not naturally have the benefit of general academic objectives or existing benchmarking mechanisms. Therefore, the

intermediate steps (objectives) or the milestones (benchmarks) must be articulated for these students in order to enable meaningful progress monitoring.

Although the regulations specify that the testing decision determines the requirement for benchmarks or objectives, it would seem reasonable that non-academic goals would benefit from clearly articulated increments of progress regardless of the achievement level of the student. There is nothing in regulation that prohibits the use of objectives and benchmarks for any student, even those succeeding with grade level content. However, the case conference committee is not obligated to craft novel objectives and benchmarks to include in the IEPs of students who are not eligible for ISTAR if there is a meaningful and valid way to measure progress regularly during the year.

At the most basic level, a graph accomplishes the criteria of providing benchmarks and objectives with the increments of time being defined by the x-axis and the increments of performance being defined by the y-axis. If the goal can be graphed, then it qualifies as having objectives and benchmarks. If a goal cannot be graphed, it would be hard to defend that goal as "measurable."

For this reason, the ISTAR7 goal setting process provides four options for using progress monitoring graphs to help conceptualize truly measurable goals. There is also one option that is purely descriptive for those who are confident in their linguistic abilities and do not desire the graphing features. Conceptualizing a goal to take advantage of the graphing mechanism results in a more defensibly measurable target.





## Goals based on Grade Level

**Q:** What is meant by the requirement to include goals based on grade level in the IEP of students in order for them to participate in the modified assessment coming in Spring of 2010?

**A:** Most of us have a keen sense of the profile of the students that we think are caught in the assessment gap. These are the students who are too cognitively able to be eligible for participating in ISTAR as a student with significant cognitive disabilities. At the same time, the academic abilities of these students are not at the level of proficiency measured by the ISTEP+ given at their grade level.

So when the federal government released regulatory language requiring that *“the student has an IEP that includes goals based on academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled”* in order for the student to qualify for the modified assessment, it was incredibly disappointing at first. We have all been fairly diligent about writing goals only for those areas that needed special education services. Typically, grade level activities are handled in general education and special educators write goals for skills that are not at grade level.

So how can this be reconciled?

First, it is important to appreciate two terms: “includes” and “based on”. The language does not say that the student has grade-level goals and only grade-level goals. Examples provided by federal organizations could be described as “aligned to build toward grade level”. This is further supported in additional regulatory language stating that *“the IEP team is reasonably certain that the student will not achieve grade level proficiency in the year covered by the IEP.”* It would not be appropriate to set goals that the student would not be expected to achieve.

The goal models put forth nationally involve identifying the grade level content standard that would be targeted including descriptions of approximations that reasonably addressed the student’s present level.

Secondly, understand that each state has been given the responsibility to define academic content standards at each grade level for all students. Therefore, “based on academic content standards” is also a state-specific construct. Indiana was recently ranked number one in the nation by Education Counts in the area of standards and accountability. Not all frameworks across the nation are as clearly articulated as those we use. Federal policy is based on a common denominator which we exceed. Examples of “goals based on grade level” offered nationally use what would be equivalent to Indiana’s broad statement of standard rather than the specific indicators under the standard. Indiana’s specificity could be our own complication in this case.

Alexa Posny, former director of OSEP, stated that there was nothing in the 2% regulations that says that an IEP goal has to be written as a grade-level content standard. Instead, she says, the goals should be rooted in how students can progress toward and demonstrate appropriate master of specific grade-level content.

Case conference committee members should share an understanding of the academic content that is expected at the grade level in which the student is enrolled. They should look for ways to give the student access to the general curriculum and encourage age-appropriate participation. Specifically for students who will be participating in the modified assessment, the case conference committee should build in assurances that the student has been afforded the opportunity to learn grade level content since this is what will be tested in the modified assessment.

This summer, our state will conclude studies on the validity of specific indicators within the continuum of academic standards in terms of their alignment to build toward each grade level. We will provide a map of these goal starters that will help practitioners identify a grade level standard and chart the plan leading to each standard for a student with present levels that do not suggest grade level proficiency.

In the meantime, there are some examples in this manual that are likely to support the requirement of being “based on academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled.” (coming soon!)



## Access to the General Curriculum

**Q:** What does it mean to give a student access to the general curriculum?

**A:** The concept was first conceived in the early 1990's as a way to include students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Amendments to IDEA in 1997 advanced the concept to mean more than just having the student be present in the classroom. Although IDEA 2004 references the term, it does not provide a clear definition of what it means.

The Access Center, a federally funded project, suggests the following indicators of access, following principles of "Universal Design" and "Backward Design":

- The general education curriculum includes appropriate, standards-based instructional and learning goals for individual students with disabilities, as well as reflects an appropriate scope and sequence.
- Materials and media being used are appropriate, research-based, and documented as being effective in helping students with similar disabilities learn general education content and skills.
- Appropriate, research-based instructional methods and practices that have a track record for helping students with similar disabilities learn general education content and skills are being used.
- Research-based supports and accommodations that have a track record of helping students with disabilities are being used.
- Appropriate tools and procedures for assessing and documenting whether students with disabilities are meeting high standards and achieving their instructional goals are being used.

Standards-based instruction can be provided in all settings ranging from the general education classroom to a special education classroom that focuses on teaching standards in core subject areas.

**Q:** How do I write goals that address the needs of my students when my students seem to have needs for everything?

**A:** It is important that the IEP be meaningful and manageable. IDEA does require that a goal is written for every identified need, but that does not mean that one goal could not address more than one need.

The key to writing manageable IEPs is to leverage efficient measurement and effective supports and services. Goals should be written keeping in mind these priorities:

- Identify goals that give access to grade level curriculum.
- Identify goals that involve the development of pivotal skills, skills that would be instrumental in accomplishing the greatest number of other skills.
- Identify goals that will increase participation in future environments.
- Build generalization skills by working on skills that are demonstrated in some contexts but not in others.
- Identify goals that are practical, relevant, and will be immediately useful.
- Identify goals that will contribute to measures of achievement.
- Leverage measurement that is research-based and can therefore speak to a broader scope of skill development.
- Consider ways to consolidate a quantity of related, smaller goals into a broader statement of intended progress. Particularly for IEPs that will be written with goals and objectives, examine the feasibility of adjusting the scope of the goal setting in order to group incremental skills into annual goals.
- Avoid including the full yearlong instructional curriculum in the statement of an annual goal.



## Goal Writing

Q: What measure can I use to evaluate my own goal writing?

A: Ask yourself these questions:

Are the goals logically driven by the needs of the student? Do they take into account the effect of the student's disability on his or her educational progress?

Is there a clear link between the individual goals of the student and the state standards? Are the goals reasonable, attainable, and useful?

Have you thought through how you will measure progress? What will be the mechanism for collecting and recording data? How will you know if the student is making progress?

Check if the IEP goals pass the "stranger" test. Could a stranger to the IEP goal be able to provide accurate assessment of the student's progress based on a clear explanation of an objective measure?

Are the goals positive statements of student performance? What is the intended outcome that will improve the quality of life for the student?

Are the goals too specific to be meaningful?  
Too broad to be measurable?  
Too many to be manageable?  
Too few to be comprehensive?  
Too arbitrary to be relevant?  
Too boilerplate to be individualized?

Do the goals provide a logical basis for the services and supports? If the student is of transition age, do the goals support post-secondary outcomes?

Try to think of your goal writing task as a process. It is an organizational commitment to guide positive action, not an end in itself. The effectiveness of the professional team will be evidenced in the progress monitoring data that is collected based on the way the goal was framed and supported.

Q: I want to use the graphing method provided in ISTAR7 that connects directly with ISTAR ratings. How do I do this?

A: The only option is the "Collection of Indicators" which most closely ties in concept with the classic templates of ISTAR.

When you rate the standard elements through one of these goals, the assessments will integrate directly with the elements in ISTAR. If you measure the same elements for progress reports as you measure for the ISTAR assessment, your ISTAR assessment will be done when you go to do it.

The first step is to collect the indicators that are relevant to student need and appropriate for progress monitoring. If the student has been assessed in ISTAR, you can find these elements by choosing the "ISTAR" tab on the "Select standard(s) / element(s) step of the goal writing wizard.

Be selective and avoid the mistake of creating a collection that is overwhelmingly difficult to monitor. A small set of key indicators can be powerfully effective.

A default rubric can be utilized for measuring these elements if they are observable and measurable as stated, like "Identifies 5 common signs and symbols"; "Removes articles of clothing, like socks or shoes"; and "Turns pages of a book, one at a time". The default rubric is on the following page.

If the collection of elements could be universally measurable, like each could be considered demonstrated if evidenced 80% of the time, then the percentages can define the entire collection.

Some elements require very unique explanations, particularly ones from the more functional skill areas like responsibility or interpersonal skills. These are best made measurable by utilizing the rubric to craft unique criteria to define mastery. The rubric designer is available as an optional tool in the collection of indicators progress monitoring design.

The results of your efforts will provide a percentage calculation of the total value of all of the items rated.

## Behavior Goals

Q: I have read materials that suggest that we set goals to reduce an undesirable behavior. The example was that Johnny kicks the teacher 15 times a month as a present level, so we write that Johnny will kick the teacher only seven times a month by March. However, in this software, I cannot find a proficiency statement related to kicking the teacher. In fact, there are no standards stated in negative terms. How can I write this goal?

A: In this new version of software, the annual goal is a blank text box. Therefore, if you felt it was appropriate, you could write in that box that Johnny will kick the teacher, slit her tires, and steal her purse at a reduced rate per month, if this is what works for you.

However, the software still requires that the user identifies the standard area to which the goal is aligned. This can be done in very broad terms or in very specific terms, depending on the relationship that the goal has to the master map of educational performance. For behavior, the goal could be related to developing responsibility, interpersonal skills or problem solving skills for example.

So let's back up for a minute. We have all most likely watched the scene from the Helen Keller movie where Helen is smacking and kicking and ripping the hair out of the head of Anne Sullivan. Picture Helen's IEP where the number of kicks, smacks, spits, and hair ripping is meticulously recorded as present levels and then goals are set to reduce the number of kicks, smacks, spits and hair ripping to, say, less than three per hour.

The best thing to do to achieve this goal would be to leave Helen alone so she is less likely to hurt you. But is that the point? If Anne Sullivan spent her professional time with Helen counting the incidents of violence and focusing on reducing the number to half by March through intermittent punishment, what would have been accomplished? It should be obvious that this is the wrong angle and encourages ineffective thinking, not to mention bruising.

The incidents of behavior decreased when Helen learned to communicate and comply.

Imagine instead a present level that described how many words Helen could spell (zero to start) and the baseline of other particular positive behaviors.

Goals need to reflect behaviors that are constructive for the student, like building a vocabulary or appropriately asking for food. Helen stopped kicking altogether because she didn't need to anymore.

The data on the frequency of the negative behavior is useful in a functional behavior analysis in order to define the problem. From this, a hypothesis of the function of the behavior is developed. The focus of the goal writing, therefore, should be to increase the positive skills that would make the negative behaviors less likely. Often, a negative behavior is communicating a need that, if discovered and addressed, will also reduce the negative behavior.

By putting the negative behavior in the goal, the focus is on stopping the negative behavior without necessarily a good understanding of why the behavior is happening in the first place.

Avoid getting in the trap of limiting the repertoire of behavior changing strategies to negative consequences and external rewards. Many kids don't give a dingle if they get a sticker.

Also, avoid measuring student behavior based on the behavior of the adults. For example, counting the number of times a student is removed from a room is more likely to be a measure of the tolerance of the teacher than the behavior of the student. Counting the number of times that a student threatens to harm is completely dependent on how threatened someone else might feel.

Try to make the goal describe what the student will be doing when the goal is reached. "Not kicking the teacher" is not as strong as "uses verbal language rather than physical aggression to communicate".

Many children are very complicated and struggle with severe disabilities, so, admittedly this isn't a simple process. A behavior goal should be positive, measurable, reasonable, attainable and useful to the student. Most importantly, behavior goals are much more effective when the information from a functional behavioral analysis links the function of the behavior to a composite of effective supports that encourage positive student performance.

### Statements of Progress

**Q:** What is the default rubric used in ISTART7 and how is it related to the rating system in ISTAR?

**A:** Both ISTAR and ISTART7 now use the same default rubric.

#### **Not Evident**

**Introductory:** No progress is evident

**Emergent:** Early stages of development

**Developing:** Progress is evident

**Ongoing:** Advanced stages of development

**Demonstrated:** Performed under direction or request

**Applied:** Used independently to complete complex tasks or solve problems.